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TO ASSIST THE INQUIRING, ANIMATE THE STRUGGLING, AND
SYMPATHISE WITH ALL.

CIRCUMSTANCES which require his attention compel the Editor to omit his usual first article this week, and also to make several extracts with only part of the comments intended for them. Luckily, their beauties will speak for themselves.

We had hoped to square our accounts for the year with a general and particular notice of all arrears, especially of such matters as we have delayed noticing, out of a desire to do them the greater justice,—from the pretty little fairy song of Messrs De Wilde and M'Korkell, up to the tragedy of 'Ion,' Tennyson's 'Poems,' and the 'New Moral World' of Mr Owen; whom, though we differ with him on some points, we do not scruple to consider, in common with Berkeley, Howard, and others, as among the angels of this earth. But we must wait.

The gentleman who requested us to state "Yes," or "No," in answer to his query respecting a certain profession, is emphatically answered "Yes."

Mr Sylvester's manuscript, so long missing, we have in vain and repeatedly looked for; a circumstance which must excuse our otherwise unwarrantable silence. His stanzas entitled 'Woman,' do him great credit.

The "Barret-cap," respecting which a correspondent inquires, is, we believe, simply a flat cap: but we know not the etymology of the word. Our Italian Dictionary has "*Berretta*"—any kind of flat cap, or bonnet: and Dufief says—"Barrette"—a sort of cap or bonnet, worn by the nobles of Venice and the Cardinals. Possibly it comes from "*Barra*"—a bar, or band; *quasi*, a band or strap round the head with a flat cover.—But if further information be wanted, it shall be sought for.

ROMANCE OF REAL LIFE.

NO. C.—STORY OF BOISSI'S ATTEMPT AT SUICIDE.

[An account of this intended family tragedy, which we met with in the 'Varieties of Literature,' quoted in our last, reminded us of another narrative of it, more complete, in Chalmers's 'Biographical Dictionary.' The latter is here extracted. We know nothing of Boissi ourselves. We take the wit and humour attributed to him for granted; but piteous as his situation was, and affecting, in particular, the spectacle of his wife and child, we cannot look upon him as a man of a right spirit. He had affection, but not of the deepest kind; pride, but not of the highest order; otherwise he would not have doomed his family to death, nor scrupled to think his friends and fellow-creatures unworthy of being allowed to do him a service for their sakes. Such catastrophes, in fact, are much oftener the effects of the worst than the best parts of sorrow,—of its anger, and

spleen, and self-estimation, rather than its suffering for others. We may guess what sort of temper was Boissi's, by his feelings when he became prosperous. Instead of being thankful for the change, he only lamented that it had not been of longer duration. Such a man was not likely to have seen into the finer parts, either of prosperity or adversity.

There seems an inconsistency on the part of the narrator, when he tells us that Boissi had no religion, and yet hoped to go to another and a better world. He might, however, have had no very settled notions of religion, and yet not have been without a sense of the general goodness of the Creator, and a probability that his lot would be smoothed in another state of existence. What he wanted was a loving *temper* of faith,—the habit of seeing something so good and beautiful at work in all things, that it never allows hope entirely to forsake us.

We hope we need not say we cast no stones at scenes like this! God forbid anything so absurd or monstrous. We have tasted too much of trouble ourselves, as well as of the sweets of joy and friendship. But we speak of it in this manner, to guard against any false conclusions from such scenes in times of agitation and struggle like the present, and to show in what real manhood and lovingness consist.]

LOUIS DE BOISSI, a celebrated French comic writer of native wit and genuine humour, was born at Vic, in Auvergne, in 1594. He came early to Paris, and began to write for the stage. The rest of his life is a moral. As has often been the fate of extraordinary favourites of the muses, though he laboured incessantly for the public, his works procured him only a competency of fame—he wanted bread; and while the theatres and coffee-houses of Paris were ringing with plaudits on his uncommon talents to promote their mirth, he was languishing, with a wife and child, under the pressure of the extremest poverty. Yet, melancholy as his situation was, he lost nothing of that pride, which forbid him to creep and fawn at the feet of a patron. Boissi had friends who would readily have relieved him; but they were never made acquainted with his real condition, or had not that friendly impetuosity which forces assistance on the modest sufferer. He at length became the prey of distress, and sunk into despondency. The shortest way to rid himself at once of his load of misery seemed to him to be death, on which he speculated with the despair of a man who had none of the consolations of religion. His wife, who was no less weary of life, listened with participation as often as he declaimed, in all the warmth of poetic rapture, on the topic of deliverance from this earthly prison, and the smiling prospects of futurity; till at length she took up the resolution to accompany him in death. But she could not bear to think of leaving her beloved son, of five years old, in a world of misery and sorrow; it was, therefore, agreed to take the child along with them, on their passage into another and a better, and they made choice of starving.

To this end, they shut themselves up in their solitary and deserted apartment, waiting their dissolution with immovable fortitude. When any one came and knocked, they fled trembling into a corner, for fear of being discovered. Their little boy, who had not yet learned to silence the calls of hunger by artificial reasons, whimpering and crying, asked for bread, but they always found means to quiet him.

It occurred to one of Boissi's friends, that it was very extraordinary he should never find him at home.

At first he thought the family had changed their lodgings; but, on assuring himself of the contrary, he began to be alarmed. He called several times in one day, and at last burst open the door, when he saw his friend, with his wife and son, extended on the bed, pale and emaciated, scarcely able to utter a sound! The boy lay in the middle, and the husband and wife had their arms thrown over him. The child stretched out his little hand towards his deliverer, and his first word was—bread! It was now the third day that not a morsel of food had entered his lips. The parents lay still in a perfect stupor; they had never heard the bursting open of the door, and felt nothing of the embraces of their agitated boy; their wasted eyes were directed towards the boy, and the tenderest expressions of pity were in the look with which they had last beheld him, and still saw him dying. Their friend hastened to take measures for their recovery; but could not succeed without difficulty. They thought themselves already far from the troubles of life, and were terrified at being suddenly brought back to them. Void of sense and reflection, they submitted to the attempts that were made to recall them to life. At length a thought occurred to their friend, which happily succeeded. He took the child from their arms, and thus roused the last spark of paternal tenderness. He gave the child some bread to eat; who, with one hand held it, and with the other alternately shook his father and mother. It seemed at once to rekindle the love of life in their hearts, on perceiving the child had left the bed and their embraces. Nature did her office. Their friend procured them strengthening broths, which he put to their lips with the utmost caution, and did not leave them till every symptom of restored life was fully visible.

This transaction made much noise in Paris, and at length reached the ears of the Marchioness de Pompadour. Boissi's deplorable situation moved her. She immediately sent him a hundred louis-d'ors, and soon after procured him the profitable place of editor of the 'Mercure de France,' with a pension for his wife and child if they outlived him. His 'Œuvres de Théâtre' are in 9 vols. 8vo. His Italian comedy, in which path he is the author of numerous pieces, has not the merit of the above. His early satire, of which he had written many, being remembered, prevented his admission into the French Academy till he was sixty years of age, though he was well entitled to that honour, by his labours and talents, twenty years sooner. He died April, 1658, complaining in his last moments, that his misery was not shortened by an earlier death, or his felicity extended by longevity.

NO. CI.—GRATITUDE OF A FREE SLAVE.

THIS story, says M. Cardonne (from a translation of whose astern Miscellany we take it), "is a fact and happened at Naples in the reign of Don Carlos, the present King of Spain" (Charles the Third, we believe), "who being himself a prince of great humanity, did not suffer so generous an act to pass unrewarded. He set the slave at liberty, and gave him his choice of remaining at Naples on a genteel pension, or to return into his native country with a considerable sum of money; and the Turk preferred the latter offer."

Some Turkish slaves on board a Christian vessel at anchor in the port of Naples, formed a conspiracy, and fixed upon a grand festival for the execution of it. Upon a signal given, they broke their chains, mas-

sacred the few officers and sailors in the ship, cut the cables and got under sail. A young Neapolitan nobleman, only ten years of age, was then upon guard. One of the slaves flew towards him with a poniard in his hand, and made a feint of plunging it into his bosom; then seizing the boy, he leaped with him into the sea, and assisted him in swimming. They both happily reached the shore, when the Turk with tears in his eyes, embracing him whom he had just saved: "I am still thy slave," said he, "or rather the slave of thy father, my kind patron, who treated me with such humanity: I value my liberty as nothing, since the price of it is the preservation of thy life; thou wouldst have perished, if I had appeared anxious to save thee, and I should have had the affliction to see thee massacred by my companions, without being able to wrest thee from their hands."

FINE ARTS.

Land and Sea Tales. By the Old Sailor. With Etchings by George Cruikshank. Two vols. Effingham Wilson.

There is no artist for whom we have a more genuine admiration than George Cruikshank. If there be painters in a style more exalted, more imaginative, more ornate, more finished, more enriched with beauty,—of grander subjects, or more sentimental,—none are more original, or more vivacious in humour and grotesque fancy. Many can make you graver, "sadder, and wiser;" but none can make you laugh longer, louder, or oftener. Add to this, the rare quality in humorous designing, Cruikshank's excellent drawing. In this respect he beats the prince of satirical painters, the profound Hogarth.

Who that is English has not laughed loud and long over his political squibs, his German imps, or his ludicrous scenes in common life? Hast thou not seen, friend reader, the two little fellows dancing about the shoemaker's room, one flourishing his newly-made *inconceivables*?—or the portable ghost of Mr Jones, just drawn from the pockets of that most thin and most grim grey man?—or the same old gentleman folding up the shadow of the horrified, but passive Peter Schlemihl?—not to mention a host of political jokes, which it would be improper to the spirit of this paper to expatiate upon; but, seeing which, we defy any one, no matter of what party, to keep his countenance, or even his voice, in order.

We have been more intensely reminded of the triumphs of our old friend, by seeing that, in common with the greatest, he is not exempt from failure. The illustrations to the 'Land and Sea Tales' are grave, and not in Cruikshank's spirit. We recognise his hand in the execution; his spirit in nothing but the old Negro, swathed in his sleeping clothes, and dregaring the old Indian with a countenance in which vigilance, *Negroism*, and consternation are most exquisitely combined.

The Tales themselves are not finely written; and some are in very poor taste,—mere narrative melodramas. The one entitled 'I drink to heads,' however, is interesting; and 'The Warlock,' which occupies the whole of the second volume, highly so, though it is a little overstrained and improbable in parts.

SORROW FOR THE DEAD.

[From an article in 'Blackwood's Magazine.' We feel so entirely with the writer respecting the silence he speaks of (cordially agreeing with him at the same time as to the respect due to other modes of enduring such afflictions), that we seem as though we dumbly grasped his hand while he is talking, to thank him for the unconscious sympathy.]

THERE are, it is said, and we believe it, who die of grief; but then they have no objects of comfort left, none for the bewildered affections to rest upon, and they corrode inwardly. What may be the effect of the loss of an only child—one whom the parent had educated, for whom alone almost he had lived—we know not. The other affliction we have known, and therefore feel sensibly the power and truth of 'The Brothers'; and we know that the remarks we have made are well founded. Yet, in some points we do not all feel alike—we mean not in degree, but in manner. Some seek the world's sympathy, and love to converse about the loved objects lost—preserve and exhibit slight relics, pictures, treasure looks and sayings, and frame memorials. Others again, and we ourselves

are of the number, put an interdiction on all such things. Names never escape our lips, nor others lips in our presence. There is, at least, an outward oblivion passed upon all. We would not have a portrait of one we have lost; we indulge not, and dare not think, nay, force our thoughts into other channels, than such as lead that way, till the habit of silence is acquired to ourselves, and to all about us, and is continued when the sensitiveness has subsided. To some the heart is as an inner sanctuary, where the beloved object is enshrined. It must not be opened to the gaze of any eye, nor its precincts trod by any foot; it is private—for silence and for the mourner. To others it is as a fair and open chapel, whose monuments, each of separate and religious gloom, are its ornaments, where chant and requiem invite, and all who approach are welcomed as pilgrims, and the mourner feels his sorrow sanctified by human sympathies.

BOYHOOD.

(From *Blackwood's Magazine*.)

Boyhood! what is the abstract idea of it? Does the word convey an individual portrait, or a compound of the imagination? What is its age? When does it commence? When depart? It has several stages. The beau-ideal of boyhood is somewhere between eight and twelve—though it exists before and after that age—but when within those years, is invested with its greatest charm. Then is the first spring of intelligence, when all that meets the eye and the ear creates its due wonder. Then the feelings are tender, and there is yet just so much sweet natural helplessness as serves to keep ever warm and active our affection, by demand upon our care, and to engender a reliance upon us, the source of mutual delight.

The portrait of the Sweet Boy in the frontispiece to this volume* is of the somewhat earlier period of boyhood. It is from a painting by Rippingille, and we may be sure therefore that it is true to nature. There is in it the peculiar expression that boys have when alone,—a look of mingled thought and wonder. Boys are indeed gregarious creatures, and when in troops, having confidence in themselves and in each other, they are all noise and sport—

"Turning to mirth all things of earth,
As only boyhood can."

But when quite alone, even in their most delightful idleness, sauntering and loitering, by green lanes or village hedge-rows, they show no signs of mirth. Watch them unseen, and you will find their lips apart, the eye enquiring; there is then a look that might be mistaken for pensiveness, but it is not that, nor is it easy to define; it is, however, singularly expressive of happiness, the result of sensibility and intuitive perception.

If you would know what a boy is, find him alone, —win his confidence. There is a depth in him worth your studying; and if he hath been well brought up to love all creatures, and hath not fallen into birds' nesting, the thrush and blackbird will not shun him, the little wren will come out from her hiding-place to look at him, for his eye hath not yet acquired the look of command or cruelty, that any living thing should fly from it. He bears about him much of the sanctity of purity that Adam had when all the creatures of the earth came to him for their names. If you are a naturalist, where is a nobler object for your scrutiny? You know not what you yourself were—you cannot recall, with any exactness, your feelings, your tastes, your impressions, your desires, your affections. Childhood to grown man is in much a sealed book; and if the grave be "that bourn from whence no traveller returns," childhood is not unlike it, for once passed, it becomes a period for speculation, more than of knowledge—the memory furnishing but a few glimpses, and slight pictures of that state. Children, boys particularly, in masses, we seldom notice, though we doubt not their being then interesting objects; but when alone, if they have not been early spoiled, they excite our wonder, admiration, and love. What a fair index of the mind within is "the shining morning face." Shakespeare was the best of portrait painters here. While we are now writing there sits beside us our own dear boy, *atatis sue 10*. Oh, what an attitude for painter or sculptor! It is neither sitting nor lying, but rounded as a ball, folded up, body and mind, with an enviable flexibility; and there are some who would show their envy by a thump on the back, and would drill the happy lounger into his bolt upright attention. Attention! is there not attention here? Look at the half open mouth, the earnest eye, quick, as if gifted with a double action of looking and conveying intelligence within. "And what, dear boy, are you reading?" "The Seven Champions of Christendom?" "And who is now your Champion?" St George of England." "And how would you like to be St George?" "Not at all." "And why?" "Because he is in prison for seven years." Could

a more rational answer be given? In your most mature age could you find a better? Here is a glorious love of liberty!

"Well boy, where are you now? Would you like now to be St George?" "That I should, papa, very much indeed." "And why?" "Because he has killed the dragon, and rescued a beautiful princess, the King of Egypt's daughter, and is going to marry her." It would be difficult to find a better reason for wishing one's self St George. O, happy, enviable age!—and so is it that dear boyhood is drinking into his thirsty soul, through eye and ear, the fine essences of the virtues, that by growth within him, under God's blessing, will become perennial fountains of love and magnanimity in manhood.

Beautiful boyhood!—that link uniting in itself and to itself both parents—half feminine in feature, form, mind, and affection; yet how decidedly masculine in adventurous spirit, that springs at the touch to instant action, and sparkling in the eyes, changes all that was feminine into masculine energy; and again, at the voice of love and sympathy, melting all that was masculine into tears of gentlest, most feminine tenderness. Beautiful boyhood! sporting in every wind, tossing his sunlit locks into the darkness of the stormiest skies, and baring his breast to every element—fearless, beautiful boyhood! beloved of nature, who, like a kind schoolmistress, sits upon the hills, and clasps her hands in joy at his pastime, giving him the earth, with all its landscapes, at once for his school and his play-ground—and then the rocks and woods re-echo his mirth; and then in thoughtful liberty wandering away, the quiet nooks enclose him in their greenness, making companions of every thing, animate and inanimate—endowed with beauty, searching with a worshiping curiosity into every leaf and flower about his path, while the boughs bend to him, and touch him with their sunshine; picking up lessons for present delight and future wisdom, by rivers' sides, by brooks, in glens and in the fields, inhaling, in every breath he draws, intelligence and health.

FAMILY LIKENESSES.

[From the 'Dover Chronicle.' By the 'Trialist,'—the writer noticed the other day in the LONDON JOURNAL.]

"Did you ever remark how remarkably old age brings out family likenesses,—which being kept, as it were, in abeyance while the passions and the business of the world engrossed the parties, come forth again in age, (as in infancy,) the features settling into their primary characters—before dissolution! I have seen some affecting instances of this,—a brother and a sister, than whom no two persons in middle life could be more unlike in countenance, or in character, becoming like twins at last. *I now see my father's lineaments in the looking-glass, where they never used to appear.*"—From a letter of Dr Southey's in the 'Autobiography of Sir Egerton Brydges.'

Beautiful thought and feeling! And the son Beheld again the features of his sire,
Saw in himself the long departed one,
The lip's own make—the eye's own chasten'd fire,
And every other lineament was there;
For son and sire, they seem'd a *brother pair*!

And as the sage child gaz'd, though now no child,
What touching mystery was his to trace
The father smiling as the offspring smil'd,
And taking every other phase of face,—
Showing how Nature plies the painter's art,
Bidding the dead re-act their human part!

And O! what bosom recollections came,
To him the living one, as there he stood!
How strong the rife heart swell'd within its frame!
How full the tear-sluice labour'd with its flood!
How many were the agencies he felt,
As on that holy picture calm he dwelt!

The seed is like its kind—a duplicate
Of those that went before; and so the glass,
That mystic image-worker, mocks at fate
And shows us in ourselves the face that was!
And this the philosophic poet saw,
With eye intent to trace great Nature's law.

Again—O blessed witchery!—he bow'd
In silence, and in meek attention, there;
And fell all humbled, though of name so proud,
Watch'd by such image of parental care,—
Once more the poet liv'd his young days through,
And re-review'd the dream as still it grew!

Thick years had gather'd on him in their flight,
And stole away the freshness of the cheek—
The red lip's roundness—all that can delight,
When the young heart would youthful beauty seek,
—Thick years had wrought the changes he espied,
Yet made him with his father more allied!

* Elton's Poems, reviewed in the Magazine.

Beautiful thought and feeling!—beautiful!
To see the parent in one's self again,
And feel within the kindred ties to pull,
Till the charg'd eye can scarce the tear retain:
Sweet Bard and Moralist, then thanks to thee
For wakening up the heart to this rich mystery!

THE DIADESTE.

(From *Cardonne's Miscellany of Eastern Learning.*)

The Orientals, who are prohibited all games of chance, make use of a game that frequently lasts for several weeks; it consists in receiving nothing from the person you are engaged to play with, without pronouncing the word *Diadesté*, from whence the game is so denominated. The two players endeavour mutually to make each other forget the terms of the convention between them, and he that by address or surprise can make his adverse party accept of anything without pronouncing the word agreed on, wins the stake.

A certain philosopher had made a very ample collection of all the arts practised by the fair sex, and carried it always about him, thinking himself thus perfectly safe from the wiles of woman. Travelling one day near camp of wild Arabs, a young Arabian woman so kindly invited him to take some refreshment in her tent, that he could not resist her importunity. The husband of this lady was absent.

Scarce was the philosopher sat down, than, to secure himself from the charms, which he began to dread, he took out his book to read. The fair, irritated at his apparent indifference, said to him, "That book must certainly be very interesting, since it is alone worthy to attract your attention; may one ask what is the science it treats of?" "It is a composition of my own," answered the philosopher; "it contains secrets not proper to be divulged." "I thought," said the lady, "that the design of writing books was to render them public; of what use is learning if not communicated? This is robbery committed on society." "I agree there with you," replied the philosopher; "but the subject of this book is not adapted to women." "You injuriously debase our sex," answered the lady, in an angry tone; "the prophet has treated us more favourably than you have done, since he has not excluded us from Paradise."

The philosopher's refusal excited more and more the lady's curiosity; she urged him so vehemently, that at last he said, "I am indeed the author of this book, but the matter is not my own; it contains all the tricks invented by women; it would not be worth your while to read your own works." "What, all entirely!" says the lady. "Yes, all," replies the philosopher; "and it is by studying them, that I have learned no longer to fear them." "That must be a very extraordinary book," said she, smiling; "believe me, profound philosopher, you attempt a thing impossible, and may as easily fill a sieve with water."

The Arabian was a coquette, and desirous of revenge. Changing the discourse to other subjects, she took occasion to cast such bewitching looks upon the pretended sage, that he soon forgot his book, and all the advice it contained. He became most violently enamoured, and without delay made an avowal of his passion. The lady, overjoyed to find that he voluntarily offered himself to her vengeance, pretended to listen to his professions. Encouraged by this reception, he began to conceive hopes of success, when the wife perceived her husband at some distance. "We are undone," said she to her new lover, "my husband will catch us together; what will become of me? He is the most jealous and brutal man living; in the name of the Prophet, hide yourself in this chest."

The philosopher, seeing no other means to extricate himself out of this unlucky scrape, got into the chest, which the lady locked, and took the key! She then went to meet her husband, and prepared his dinner. Towards the end of the repast, perceiving her husband in a pleasant humour, "I must recount to you," said she, "a very singular adventure. There came this morning a kind of philosopher, who pretends to have collected into one book all the arts and deceptions that our sex can put in practice. This pretender to knowledge had declared a passion for me; I listened to him without anger; he is young, amiable, and very pressing; you arrived very fortunately to support my wavering virtue."

One may imagine the fury of the husband at these words, who was indeed naturally of a suspicious and passionate disposition. The philosopher, who heard every syllable from his confinement, heartily cursed his book, women, and jealous husbands. "Where

is this rash man concealed?" cried he to his wife. "Let me sacrifice him to my vengeance, or I will instantly sacrifice thee." The crafty dame pretending to be extremely terrified, pointed to the chest, and gave him the key. As the husband was going to open it, his wife burst into laughter, "Pay me," exclaimed she, "You have lost the *Diadesté*." Another time be less curious, or have a better memory."

The husband thinking himself very happy to find no other cause for his alarms, returned the key to his wife, and payed her the demand; and after desiring her to give him no more such subject of apprehension, left the tent. The lady then released the philosopher from his prison, more than half dead. "Good doctor," says she, "don't forget this contrivance; it merits a place in your collection."

* *Diadesté*, Touch-stake.

SUICIDE OF VATEL.

[See *London Journal*, No 88.]

DEAR SIR.—You are not right yet. *Marée* is not salt-fish, but fresh fish; making almost as much difference as in the case of Marc Antony, when Cleopatra hung a salt fish on his hook. The primary meaning of *marée* is "tide;" evidently from the Latin *mare*. The secondary meaning, is the fish, alive and kicking, which has been brought in by the fishermen by to-day's tide. And the story concerning the French cook, I believe, is, that he met a boy with an inconsiderable quantity of fish, and on asking him if that was all, was answered it was; whereupon, not knowing that the boy was only one of many messengers who had been dispatched to various parts of the coast for the supply of the dinner to the king, he went to his room and threw himself, like a Roman, upon his sword, and immediately afterwards the fish came pouring in from all quarters.

[Another correspondent has favoured us with the same evidently right reading. We have not yet seen the French ourselves, otherwise our dictionary would have forestalled the above pleasantly-put correction:

Marée—Tide, ebb and flow (of the sea); fresh-sea-fish.—*Vendeur de Marée*—(in Paris) fishmonger, &c. &c.

See the excellent dictionary of Dufief.]

BEN JONSON.

He had constitutional infirmities to struggle with, but his heart was full of humanity. Sturdy and plain-spoken he unquestionably was, for he could send back a message to a king from whom a tardy and slight gratuity had come to him in his poverty and sickness—"I suppose he sends me this because I live in an alley; tell him his soul lives in an alley." Severe too he was at times; but that need not be urged as a reproach. One thing he never was, the cancer and curse of all social intercourse, *indifferent*. He had, in truth, a heart which beat always strongly, whether for praise or blame. He was not a "contemner and scorner of others," for he has written the highest and most affectionate panegyrics on his contemporaries of any man that lived in his age. A "lover of himself" he might be; but yet he had a noble distrust of that affection; and a little vanity may fairly enough be allowed to one who was placed on a sort of critical judgment-seat by the consent of his greatest fellow-labourers in letters. His personal appearance, his "mountain belly," and "his rocky face," he has himself described. "He was of a clear fair skin," says Aubrey; "his habit was very plain."—*Book of Gems*.

TABLE TALK.

—The sufferings from malignity abroad, are not so great as the sufferings from malignity within.—*Whicheote*.—[That is,—to be malignant ourselves, and to suffer in consequence, is worse than suffering from the malignity of others.]

—True religion will make those good-natured, whom it finds bad-natured.—*Whicheote*.—[A beautiful test this, indeed, for judging of claims to religious truth.]

THE TEMPER OF REASON AND GOODNESS.

Give me the man, of whom I may say—This is the person, who, in the true use of reason (the perfection of Human Nature),—who, in the practice and exercise of virtue (its accomplishments), hath brought himself into such a temper, as is conatural to those principles, and warranted by them.—*Whicheote*.

SELF-WILL ITS OWN COUNTERACTION.

He that gives way to self-will, hinders self-enjoyment.—*Whicheote*.

LORD ERSKINE'S GOOSE.
(From the letter of a Friend.)

Thank you for your goose annals, to which I can add another of more recent date than either, and more to the renown of the dignified creature that never bends its noble head save when it passes beneath a barn-door-way. A goose was brought as evidence in a trial where Lord Erskine presided, and he was so delighted with the bird's sagacity, that he determined to adopt one of his race. He chose, from a flock, a creature in all things most like the goose in question. He then lived at Hampstead. He grew excessively fond of the goose—made it his constant companion—took it in his carriage on all occasions to Westminster hall, and consulted it as his oracle. A relative of Lord Erskine, who gave this account, said, "but a carriage drove over and ended the life of the poor goose—which F observed was a fortunate thing, for its wisdom was making him superstitious."

HENRY THE EIGHTH ON A PILGRIMAGE.

[From Miss Agnes Strickland's 'Pilgrims of Walsingham.'—Miss Strickland is somewhat too gratuitous in her plots, and we do not always admire the "pride of her heroine;" but she has feeling, archness, and character.]

The first day's journey, which was pleasantly and for those times expeditiously performed, brought the royal pilgrims, and their little train, as far on their way as Bishop's Stortford. There they halted for the night, and took up their quarters at a small monastery, at the entrance of the town, where Wolsey, who was the conductor of the party, being well known to the superior, they received the most hospitable attention and entertainment, though the quality of his company was not suspected, it having been previously arranged by the King, who was very desirous of preserving his incognito, that in case of the well-known person of the Cardinal being recognized, the others were to pass for pilgrims travelling in his train.

Both King and Queen were so much fatigued with the extraordinary exertion of travelling upwards of twenty miles on horseback, immediately after their journey from Windsor to Havering Bower, that they proposed retiring to rest after partaking the evening meal, which was hastily prepared for their refection, by the hospitable fraternity, and to which King Henry, whose appetite was sharpened by the fresh air of the forest, and a longer fast than usual, did such ample justice, that the astonished Prior asked Wolsey, in a whisper aside, "if the fat pilgrim was not indeed a wolf in sheep's clothing."

"Thou wouldest say, thou hast given a shrewd guess, an' thou knowest all, master Prior," thought Wolsey, who could scarcely forbear from smiling at the quaintness of the question, as applied to the proceedings of his royal master at the convent supper; but assuming a grave countenance, he told the Prior that if the appetite of any of his company exceeded their welcome, he should make a point of paying for what they consumed, as it was not his wish to be chargeable to any one.

The Prior, who was one of those facetious souls who will have their joke, without regard to consequences, was sorely dismayed at finding that it had given offence to the mighty Cardinal; and began to offer the humblest apologies for his observation on the fat pilgrim's devourings, which he assured Wolsey it did him good to see; nor should he have ventured a remark on his eating, had he not felt his curiosity excited by the singular behaviour of the said pilgrim, whose manners, or rather lack of manners, made him suspect that he was not altogether what he appeared, but some very strange, outlandish person, who had joined himself to his Eminence's worshipful train. "But mayhap," added the Prior, who perceived from the Cardinal's countenance, that he was floundering in the dark, from one blunder to another, and was at the same time very solicitous to repair his mistakes—"Mayhap, most reverend and puissant Lord, I have fallen into great error in unadvisedly observing on the doings of yonder portly pilgrim, whom I now, from certain tokens, do opine to be your Eminence's most worshipful fool."

"Friend," rejoined Wolsey, "it would be wiser of thee to defer passing thy opinion till it was asked, and then to say as little as need be of any man of whom thou knowest so little as of yonder pilgrim; whose fangs (since thou likened him to a wolf,) thou hadst better avoid." Then, observing the King had risen from table, the Cardinal ventured to infringe

upon the rules of the pilgrimage, by taking up the Prior's own silver lamp, to light the royal incognito to his chamber; an action which betrayed sufficiently, even to their simple host, the quality of their guest, on whose appetite he had passed such indiscreet remarks; and, falling on his knees full in the King's path, he exclaimed, in a doleful whine:

"Alack, alack! my Lord Cardinal, and have I put my holy neck into jeopardy by treasonably mistaking our gracious Lord the King for thy fool. I cry him mercy, for I wist not who the portly pilgrim was till I saw thee rise to do him service; for well I wot there is but one man in Christendom barring his Holiness the Pope, to whom thou wouldest descendest to offer thy devoir, and that must be our Lord the King, whom may God preserve and bless."

"Odds! my life, what is all this bother about?" cried Henry, stepping back in surprise, "take me for thy fool, Wolsey, ha! The fellow may be nearer the truth, in some things, than he thinks, by the mass."

"My gracious Lord," replied the Cardinal, "this blundering Prior is an instance of the truth of the proverb, 'a fool's bolt is soon shot.' I pray you to forgive his unmannered ignorance, since he was guiltless of intentional disrespect to your Grace, and only uttered a random guess to provoke me into disclosing your real quality."

"That I might enjoy the rare felicity of paying my dutiful and loving homage to your Royal Grace, by ordering such a breakfast for you as might prove my loyal and loving respect unto your Royal person," rejoined the distressed Prior; "and indeed, my gracious Lord, you must lay the fault on the closeness of your masking, and the quaintness of your mumming; but, in veritable truth, I took you for something extraordinary under it all—did I not, my Lord Cardinal?"

"For a lion in an ass's skin, was it Prior, ha?" rejoined the King, laughing at his own conceit, in reversing the position of the adage, and willing himself to turn the attention of the company from the

simple Prior's first guess. But the Prior was one of those absurd people who are incapable of taking a hint; so he replied in a tone of horror:

"The saints forbid that I should have taken mine anointed Lord for so rapacious a beast as a savage lion, that goeth about ramping and roaring, and seeking whom he may devour; or profanely likened the holy garb of Walsingham pilgrim to the foolish skin of a vile ass; but indeed, my gracious Lord, I only took you, as my Lord Cardinal knoweth, for a wolf in sheep's clothing.—Now a sheep is a very gracious animal—and if possessed of the valour and wisdom of a wolf, would be more respected than any other beast of the forest; yes, he would be a worshipful creature, as I will prove by several demonstrative arguments."

"I must beseech of you, Master Prior, to defer them till the next time I call at your hospitable house," yawned the King; "at present, I am somewhat sleepy, and would prefer one of your own down pillows to the best sermon that was ever preached; though I must own you have chosen a queer text to hold forth upon."

THE PRINTING MACHINE.

ISLANDS OF SOCOTRA AND ASCENSION.

The Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London. Vol. V. Part II. 8vo. London, 1835. Murray. Pp. 406.

ALTHOUGH this number of the 'Journal of the Geographical Society' is not very rich in articles of a more strictly scientific character, Lieutenant Kempthorne's notes made on a survey along the eastern shores of the Persian Gulf, in 1828, being the most important paper it contains of that class, it perhaps exceeds in popular interest any one which has preceded it. Even Lieutenant Kempthorne's communication, indeed, abounds also in this latter kind of attraction—in sketches, we mean, of actual human life and adventure, or at least in historical notices, as well as in mere latitudes and longitudes. On the other hand, the papers of which the more direct object is to set before us, not so much the outlines of coasts and the courses of rivers, as the manners and general social condition of the inhabitants of remote or imperfectly known lands, have also a considerable portion of matter of scientific value mixed up with their narratives and descriptions. There are two papers in the number, in particular—one, extending to the great length of above a hundred pages, on the Island of Socotra—the other, which is much shorter, on the Island of Ascension—with which we have been greatly interested.

The Memoir on the Island of Socotra is communicated by Lieutenant J. R. Wellsted, of the East India Company's Marine Service. It does great credit in every way to the talents of that young officer—to his literary no less than to his more peculiarly professional qualifications. We have not often read either a more amusing story of this sort, or one more spiritedly told.

The Island of Socotra lies out from Cape Guardafui, the north eastern extremity of Africa, to which continent it is considerably nearer than to the coast of Arabia, on the north west. It is also nearer to the entrance of the Red Sea than to that of the Persian Gulf. The island is about sixty miles in length from east to west, and about twenty in breadth throughout the greater part of its extent. A map of it, on a large scale, is given along with the present memoir, after the survey of the interior taken by the writer, and of the coast by Captain Haynes, in the Company's ship, the Palinurus, under whose command he was. This is one of several most important services of the same kind—including surveys of the east coast of the Persian Gulf, and of both coasts of the Red Sea—for which science has lately been indebted to the Anglo-Indian Government.

Socotra is believed to be the same island mentioned by Ptolemy, under the name of Dioscoridis Insula. It is also noticed by Arrian in his 'Periplos of the Erythraean Sea.' He speaks of it as then (in the second century) subject to the Kings of Arabia Felix. It was heard of, and an account of it brought home to Europe by Marco Polo, in the latter part of the thirteenth century—and this appears to have

been the first intimation of its existence received by the people of this part of the world in modern times. Marco Polo calls it Scoria, or, according to other manuscripts of his travels, Scoria. The inhabitants, he says, were Christians, but not subject to the Pope. He describes them as nearly naked, and as growing no other sort of grain than rice. A very curious fact, which he mentions, is, that they were accustomed to catch whales, for the sake of the ambergris which was to be found in their stomachs. This statement was omitted in the old English and other translations of the work, and remained generally unnoticed till attention was called to it by the general agreement of naturalists in modern times, that the substance in question, the origin of which had been always a mystery, is really a concretion formed in the stomach or intestines of the whale. The people of Socotra, according to Marco Polo, destroyed the fish by harpooning it. They also extracted the oil from its head. But the thing for which he speaks of these islanders as chiefly renowned, is their skill in magic; in which he tells us they were alleged to excel all other nations in the world. Their supernatural powers they seem to have employed principally in raising storms in the neighbouring seas, and forcing into their ports, or upon their coasts, any ships that had molested or otherwise injured them.

The first modern European navigator by whom Socotra was actually seen and visited, and the person therefore properly entitled to be called its discoverer, was the Portuguese Captain Diego Fernandez Pereyra. He put in here in 1504. Faria, the historian of the early Portuguese navigations, gives us an account of the state in which the island was found at this time. It is described as mountainous in the centre, and generally sterile and desolate, owing to the violent winds from the north, which often send the sand from the shore up to the most elevated heights in the interior. There were no spacious or very good ports, but those afterwards most frequented by the Portuguese were Zoko, where the inhabitants were Moors or Arabs, Calenser to the west, and Beni to the east. In Lieutenant Wellsted's map we find Zoko, from which probably the island has its name, marked Suk, about two miles east from the present capital, Tamarida:—"I traversed the whole of this ground," he says, "in search of some remains of the Portuguese; the only traces I was able to discover were two forts, one situated on the lower ridges of Djebel Rummel, and another on a small rounded hillock in the centre of the plain, and nearly abreast of the anchorage, from which it shows very conspicuously. Both are now completely dismantled, and have nothing in their appearance to entitle them to further notice. In the vicinity of the former some groves are pointed out by the Arabs as containing the remains of the Faringees, and near the small hamlet of Suk, the remains of a town may be seen, which, under the name of Hadieeboo, tradition says, was the principal one on the island. Beyond the floor and walls of the houses nothing now remains to point it out. I am unable to ascertain at what period Tamarida was erected, but, from its name and the appearance of the houses, I am inclined to think it must have been posterior to the first arrival of the Portuguese; and most probably it was erected by those who succeeded them

in the government of the island. The natives date its existence from a much earlier period, but little reliance can be placed on their testimony.

"Amidst the groves near Suk it is said that considerable quantities of brass are yet occasionally dug up, with hilts of swords and broken fragments of armour. As soon, however, as they are found they are shipped off to Muscat or Zanzibar for sale,* and thus, as none were found during my stay, I was unable to procure any. In my search for coins I was equally unsuccessful."

Calenser is the port near the western extremity of the island, which Mr Wellsted calls Gollonsier or Collesah. Of Beni we find no trace in either the map or the memoir, unless it may have been situated at the part of the coast marked Bunder Debenee. There is no village marked at this place, but it is about four or five miles to the east of Suk.

Faria also gravely mentions the magical practices of the Socotrans. This reputation they seem now to have lost; at least Mr Wellsted says nothing on the subject. As in the time of Marco Polo, so when first visited by the Portuguese, the natives were still Christians, though not Roman Catholics. They are described as holding what is called the Jacobite form of Christianity, the same as that professed by the Abyssinians. The origin, however, of the Christianity of Socotra, and also that of the people themselves, are questions upon which scarcely any light has yet been thrown. Whether they came from Arabia or from Africa, is still matter of doubt; and whether they brought their religion with them, or were converted by missionaries after having been settled in the island, must be considered as nearly equally uncertain. Although they themselves boasted, however, of having received the faith from St Thomas, it is not likely they were Christians in the times of Arrian and Ptolemy, both of whom speak of the island as inhabited. When the Portuguese first visited it, they are said to have found the inhabitants possessed of books written in what the narrators call the Chaldean, by which they mean the Ethiopic character. This fact would go a great way to support the Abyssinian origin of the literature, and no doubt of the Christianity also, of the Socotrans. The old accounts tell us, that they held the cross in great veneration, not only displaying that sacred symbol on the tops of their churches, which were numerous, but wearing it about their persons, and, according to the expression of the Catholic writers, adoring or worshipping it. They also showed a singularly religious turn in another respect; every man was named after one or other of the apostles, and all the women (which must have been inconvenient) were Maries. The latter, however, if we are to believe all that is told of them, were by no means models of feminine softness; it is asserted that they armed themselves, when occasion called, and went forth to war as well as the men; and they are also charged with being in the habit of imitating the ancient Amazons in other particulars.

* Stories of treasures hidden by the Portuguese are still fondly clung to by the natives, but I could never learn that, with the exception of the above fragments, any thing of importance was found.

The Portuguese found the Island of Socotra subject to one of the Princes of the opposite coast of Arabia, called the King of Cashen, or Cassan, or Carassem, or Kushen, or Caschem—all variations of the name now usually written Keshin or Kisseen, a well known port on that coast. There was a resident Governor appointed by this Sovereign; and the place was defended by a fort, which is described as having been neither ill-built nor unprovided with the means of defence. This fort, however, having been attacked, in the year 1508, by the celebrated Albuquerque and Tristan de Cunna, who had been dispatched from Portugal in the beginning of the same year expressly to effect the conquest of Socotra, was, in spite of a gallant resistance on the part of the Arabs, soon reduced, and its fall was immediately followed by the submission of the whole island. It is stated that of the garrison, consisting of eighty individuals, but one escaped. The assailants lost only six men. The Arabs, or Moors as they are called, who were thus driven from the country, and were probably Mahomedans, had ruled their Christian subjects with a rod of iron; and the latter are affirmed to have testified a very lively satisfaction on finding themselves transferred to the dominion of the Portuguese. The conquerors left a body of a hundred men to guard their new possession.

How long the Portuguese maintained their position here, we do not know. From the description of the state of the island given in Casoh's account of the voyage of Stephen de Gama from Goa to Suez, in 1541, a translation of which Purchas has printed in the second volume of his 'Pilgrims,' it would almost seem that it had been already abandoned. He says that the people have neither King, Governor, Bishop, nor, in short, any description of person whom they recognize as having authority over them—that they live like the beasts, without any sort of law or government. When the island was visited by the English East India Company's ships, under the command of Sir Henry Middleton, in 1610, it was found to be again in possession of the King of Kuschem, or Kizeen, or rather, as he is called, the King of Tartack, adjoining to the district of Aden, who had his residence at Kuschem. The Governor was a son of this Prince, and was called Muley Amar Eben Sayd. At this time Tamerin, evidently the same place with the modern Tamarida, is expressly spoken of as the principal town of the island. Mr Wellsted says, upon what authority we do not know, that the Portuguese speedily intermarried with the inhabitants, and lost their ascendancy. It is well known, at any rate, that, with the exception of one or two ports only, where they still retain a footing, these Europeans were in no long time dispossessed by the Arabs or Moors of all their conquests in those parts, and a magnificent chain of empire, which extended from Lisbon almost to China, reduced to a few broken and far separated links.

A short account of Socotra, and of an interview which he had with the Governor, is given us by Sir Henry Middleton, in his own narrative of his voyage; and his statements are repeated with some additions in the Journal of Captain Downton, who commanded another ship in the same expedition. Captain John Saris, an account of whose voyage is in Purchas, was also here, with some ships belonging to the Company, soon after Middleton. He had likewise an interview with the Governor, whom he calls the Sultan Amir Ebensaid. Of above a hundred individuals who formed the royal suite, there were not, he says, fifty decently clothed. These appear to have been Arabs. All the rest were a crowd of wretched-looking natives, most of whom were nearly naked. Saris complains sadly of the high prices they made him pay for the few supplies he was able to obtain. "From having been long accustomed," he says, "to calls from European ships, they had acquired the habit of charging exorbitantly for such refreshments as the island afforded."

Mr Wellsted observes, that at the commencement of the seventeenth century, Socotra was frequently visited

by our ships for shelter or refreshment, and that "in 1800, when the French army was in Egypt, Commodore Blanket was authorised to take possession of it, but does not appear to have found this necessary or advisable under the circumstances in which he was placed." "More than one vessel," he adds, "has at different periods been despatched to examine the nature of the harbours and anchorages of this island; but, owing to some cause which I cannot explain, our information on these points has not hitherto been superior to that regarding the interior; and our ignorance on both subjects seems the more remarkable, when we consider the position of Socotra, directly in the route of the trade from India by the way of the Red Sea (the entrance to which it may be said to command) on the one hand, and close to the track of our ships by the way of the Cape on the other,—position, the advantages of which, under an enterprising population and enlightened government, could scarcely have failed at some period to have brought it into great commercial notice and prosperity. For besides this, the trade which is at present centred at Mocha, where ships, from the strength of the southerly winds, are frequently detained four and five months, might be most advantageously removed here; where, though the S.W. monsoon might prevent boats from bringing their cargoes at that time over, it could never prevent ships from touching and taking away merchandise brought by them during the fine season."

But Socotra has lately acquired a new interest from the schemes which have been proposed for the establishment of a steam-communication between India and Europe. If this navigation is to be attempted by the way of the Red Sea, Socotra from its position would seem a most eligible station for a coal dépôt. It becomes therefore important to ascertain if the island possesses any good harbour. It appears to have been principally with the object of solving this question that the present survey was undertaken.

At present Socotra appears scarcely to have any master. It has returned nearly to the state of things described by Castro as prevailing in the middle of the 16th century, when there was neither law nor government of any kind, and every man did what was right in its own eyes. "Until within the last half-century," says Mr Wellsted, "a brother or some near relation of the Sultan of Kisseen, on the Arabian coast, resided constantly on the island as its Governor; but it is now merely subjected to an annual visit from such a personage. The revenue is then collected, and any complaints which require the interference of the Sultan are brought before him. During our stay at Kisseen, and on the island, we made numerous inquiries to ascertain who at present exercises this power; but it proved no easy matter to discover this." The revenue annually collected from the island, it seems, barely exceeds in value two hundred dollars. Mr Wellsted considers the population to amount to about four thousand.

All the inhabitants of the island now profess the Mahometan religion—not a vestige of any form of Christianity remaining among them. The population of most of the villages on the coast appears to consist of a mongrel race, descended from the Portuguese, the Arabs, and other emigrants probably from both the neighbouring continents. They distinguish themselves, however, by the name of Arabs; while the inhabitants of the hilly country in the interior are denominated Bedouins, as exhibiting a resemblance in their wandering life to the unsettled tribes to which that name is given on the continent.

The preliminary notices which we have thus thrown together will put the reader in a condition for taking an interest in a few passages which we shall now subjoin from the lively and amusing narrative before us.

Great indolence and considerable cowardice seem to characterize both the Arab and Bedouin population; but the former are besides distinguished by a sullenness of temper, and other disagreeable qualities, from which the latter are entirely free. The Bedouin has also greatly the advantage in personal appearance. The mountaineer of Socotra is much of a mere animal it is true; but still he is a fine animal,—frank, good-humoured, hospitable, and, what is much more rare in the savage or half-savage, wonderfully honest. The timid and unenergetic charac-

ter of both highlanders and lowlanders tends to keep down the amount of crimes of all kinds. "Notwithstanding the singular anomaly," observes the present writer, "of so great a number of people residing together without any chiefs or laws, offences against the good order of society appear infinitely less frequent than among more civilized nations. Theft, murder, and heinous crimes, are almost unknown; and no stronger instance can be given of the absence of the former than the fact of my wandering for two months on the island without having during that period missed the most trifling article. Some intelligent natives, also, assured me that the only disturbances known were occasional quarrels among the Bedouins respecting their pasture grounds; which were usually settled either by the individuals fighting the matter out with sticks, or by the interference of their friends."

Our first exhibition of the Socotran Bedouin shall bring him forward in his animal character:—

"A few minutes after my return to the tent, first one, and then several Bedouins were perceived looking at us from the summit of a hill; on which our guide recommended that we should conceal ourselves within it, while he, accompanied by one of the slaves, would endeavour to bring them to us. Near dusk he returned with the whole party; a tall man about thirty, who was easily recognised as one of the rulers or elders, seated himself at our invitation in the tent, while the remainder squatted themselves down near the door outside: our new visitor was at first too much astonished at all he saw to trouble himself about any inquiries as to the nature of our visit; repeated exclamations of astonishment burst from him, as he inspected with a hurried and almost childish curiosity the articles we had with us: he was sorely puzzled with the watch, and appeared to believe, with all his attendants, that the beating of the second hand was produced by a living animal. The instant I perceived their curiosity in some measure satiated, I invited him and all his followers to partake of a meal of rice and ghee which our slaves had prepared. The avidity with which they all helped themselves to this, and the enormous quantities which they devoured, verified our guide's remark, that it was but seldom they partook of such fare; and also showed us how far the keenness of the mountain air enabled our guests to excel what, in voracity, I thought the unequalled performers of our attendants. I have remarked that the Arabs (especially those who reside in towns) are by no means so abstemious as they are usually supposed; and the Indian, it is well known, though he indulges in but two meals a day, makes up in quantity for the meagre quality of his food; but I never was more astonished than by the performance of these islanders. The best attempts of the two former are mere pigmy efforts, contrasted with the gigantic capacity of the latter. On more than one occasion, I have seen three of the party which accompanied us finish between sunrise and sunset the whole carcase, head, entrails, &c. of a sheep; and whenever they could obtain them, they would make four meals of animal food during the day, and urge no objection to partaking of whatever rice came in their way between whiles. Nothing excited more astonishment with them than our, comparatively speaking, spare and meagre diet. 'That a meal!' said Abdallah to me, one day, in his house at Tamarida, as he observed our servant placing a breakfast for myself and Mr Cruttenden before us; 'why the youngest of my children' (a boy about eight years of age) 'devours daily at each meal twice that quantity!' Some coffee and tobacco distributed to them after they were seated, put the whole party in the utmost good humour. They conversed with us freely on every subject connected with their customs and mode of life, nor did they feel any reluctance to converse on the subject of their women, in praise of the beauty and fairness of whom they were very lavish."

Of the fair beings thus admired and prized, there are several sketches. We select the following:—

"After breakfast two females approached us with a present of milk and a young lamb: these ladies conversed freely with us unveiled, at which I was somewhat surprised, considering that they were married to Arabs, who evince or affect quite as much jealousy of their women as their brethren on the continent. When I mentioned this to young Suleiman, our guide, (who was absent at the time,) he cleared up the difficulty by informing me that their husbands were absent with their sheep, and had left their dames at home to make butter and spin wool; seeing the Faringees pass, they could not resist the temptation of conversing with us. The first thing which attracted their attention was my clothes, which were spread out in the sun to dry; they examined them most minutely, and laughed immoderately as they discovered, or were told, the various purposes to which the different articles were applied: one expressed so much admiration of a pair of white trousers which she drew on in imitation of mine, that I could not but beg her acceptance of them. To her companion I was obliged to be equally liberal; and it would have disturbed the gravity of a more staid personage than myself, to have witnessed them strutting and fro in their new habiliments before me. The

pockets puzzled them a good deal, but by placing some needles and thread within them I soon explained their use. Both these females were Bedouins, and had fine features, but neither could be called handsome; there was, however, in their features, and in their fine dark eyes, an expression of much shrewdness and good-humour. 'Twenty-six years of age,' said one of them to me, 'and not yet married?—why, who takes care of your house, prepares your meals, &c. &c.? I endeavoured to explain this circumstance as well and as briefly as their valuable inquiries would allow me, but nothing would convince them that any benefit could compensate for so many years' absence from connubial felicity, though, as a set-off against this, our custom of confining ourselves to one wife was much commended. When they took leave I offered them my hand; they laughed, but gave theirs, when I assured them it was our English custom. They promised, if I would remain another day, that they would come in the morning with a supply of milk, dukkun, dates, and other Socotran luxuries, and would listen during the whole day to tales of the Ingleses and their country; but to this, for obvious reasons, I could not now assent. It is singular that, in the course of this conversation, no allusion or inquiry was made as to whether or not I was a Mussulman, usually the first question asked by all classes: but probably they thought that I was, and I did not wish to hazard my popularity by gratuitously deceiving them."

In the next scene we have both sexes together:—

"As I had to take some angles and altitudes where we halted, I was obliged to produce my sextant, which, to my great horror, underwent a minute and close examination; but the astonishment with which they viewed so complicated a machine was quite tame compared with the intense and excessive surprise with which they regarded the inverted telescope. I made one of the servants stand at a short distance from the tent while they looked at him through it, for not one of them would, on any account, subject themselves to such a scrutiny—the females, in particular, ran away directly it was proposed to them. It was now, it must be remembered, the Ramadan, and the approach of sunset relieved us for a short time from our visitors, but as soon as they had finished their evening meal a number returned. The greater proportion of these were females, the most noisy and talkative of our former visitors. Numerous and incessant were the questions which they proposed to us: Had we any sheep, goats, or bullocks in our country? Any rain? Did we ever sully (pray)? What number of wives had the English sultan? Were we married? But beyond all, and they were joined in this by the men, what were we doing here, 'writing down' (as they had seen us) hills, trees, and flowers? This point was the only one on which we found it difficult to satisfy them. They laughed at the idea that the English sultan would be at the expense of sending a ship to 'measure the island,' or to ascertain in what respect its productions differed from others. 'You want to take possession of it as your forefathers the Faringees did,' was all I could get in reply to this. The statue of the men we saw here was generally tall, and their figures were well knit and symmetrically proportioned. The same varieties which I have before noticed in their modes of dressing the hair exist here; their eyes are sparkling and lively; the teeth, even of those advanced in years, were of a pearly whiteness; and the expression of their countenances was good-humoured, animated, and intelligent. They evinced no jealousy of their women, who, in their turn, after their first introduction to us, as I have already noticed, evinced neither fear nor shyness; several of them were remarkably fair and pretty, with mostly the Jewish cast of countenance."

We must confine ourselves to one adventure more:—

"Twenty or thirty Bedouins approached us here. Our guide informed me, from what he had overheard, that these men were not well-inclined towards us, and should not be trusted. I thought it as well, therefore, to take the first opportunity of showing them that we were not unprovided with the means of defence, and as, a short time afterwards, one of them put the question direct to me, in what way we should be able to punish those who might feel disposed to pilfer from us, I pointed out a tree at a considerable distance, and asked them if they thought it possible for me to strike it with one of my double-barrelled pistols, which I usually wore hidden at my belt. A smile of incredulity passed over the very handsome face of one of the men who was standing next me, and who had been the most importunate in his inquiries. I immediately drew one of them, and by a lucky chance sent both balls directly through its trunk. More than half their number ran directly the piece was fired, and I never saw greater astonishment than was depicted in the countenances of those who remained; the suddenness of the act, and the absence to them of any visible means by which the powder had been ignited, together with the celerity with which the balls had been discharged one after the other, were so unlike what they had ever seen or heard of before, that they appeared, as they probed the perforations with their finger to assure themselves that it had actually penetrated, to be scarcely

able to believe the evidence of their senses. To improve on their present astonishment, our guide, unknown to me, represented to them that if any one, not belonging to our own party, should approach our tent unbidden, they would go off by themselves and shoot them. I should not have ventured to repeat so ridiculous a story had I not been assured by irrefragable proofs that it was circulated with great rapidity over the island, and that to the extent of this credulity we were indebted (especially in the eastern parts of the island) for the safety of our baggage, as well as our not meeting with any resistance while passing through these narrow ravines, where a few resolute men might defend themselves against any force that could be brought against them. The men we saw here were equally handsome and well-formed with the other Bedouins we have met with."

Ever since it became known to the modern world Socotra has been celebrated for its aloes, which are the finest in the world. The peculiar species of the plant which is found here, and is called by botanists the *Aloe Spicata*, or *Socotrina*, has, we believe, been transferred to the West Indies, and other parts of the world; but the produce which it yields in its original soil is still the most highly esteemed. The plant, according to Mr Wellsted, is called in the language of the island, Tayef, and by the Arabs, Soobah. "It is found," he says, "growing spontaneously on the sides and summits of the limestone mountains, at an elevation of from five hundred to three thousand feet above the level of the plains. The plants appear to thrive only in parched and barren places; its leaves are plucked at any period, and after being placed in a skin the juice is suffered to exude from them. In this state they are brought into Tamarida and Colesah, whence they are mostly shipped for Muscat, where their price varies very considerably. In 1833 the best sold for one rupee the Bengal seer (nearly an English pound): while, of the more indifferent, four seers might be procured for a dollar. The Socotra aloes, when pure, are the finest in the world; but owing to the careless manner in which they are gathered and packed, they contract many impurities, and their value becomes proportionately deteriorated. Formerly every part of the island produced the aloe; and the whole was farmed out to different individuals, the produce being monopolized at a fixed price by the Sultan. The boundaries, however, thus set up, which consisted of loose stone walls, and were carried with immense labour over hill and dale, though they still remain, under the present unsettled government no longer distinguish property. The descendants of the owners to whom the several fields were formerly allotted, have either withdrawn their claims, or these are forgotten. At present, any one collects the aloe leaves who chooses to take the trouble, and nothing is levied on account of the Sultan. As they lodge but little in warehouses, and merely collect when the arrival of a ship or buggaloo creates a demand, the quantity purchased or produced has been supposed to be much less than it is in reality; but on the west side of the island the hills, for an extent of miles, are so thickly covered with the plants, that it is not likely, at any future period, that the whole quantity will be collected which might be procured. The quantity exported within the last five years has varied very much; in 1833, it amounted to eighty-three skins, or two tons."

But here we must make an end of our extracts, though we have still left for the greater part of the ground gone over by Mr Wellsted, ungleaned from and untouched.

The article to which we are now about to turn, presents us with the picture of another insulated community, placed in still more unusual circumstances, and, therefore, in certain respects, awakening a still stronger interest than the Bedouins of Socotra. These half-savages, the descendants, we have no doubt, as all history and all present appearances testify, of ancestors in a much higher state of civilization, by whom the original settlement of the island was effected, may be said to exhibit the spectacle, not of man subduing nature, as we are accustomed to see him doing in more favourable circumstances, but of the obdurate and stern opposition of the things without him, keeping back, at all points, man's innate progressive tendency, and either fixing him permanently to the place he occupies, or forcing him gradually further and further down the declivity.—The interest attached to the handful of settlers planted on the Island of Ascension, is of quite an opposite character. Here we have all the excitement of an onward and hopeful struggle, of adventure difficult and perilous, but still, in as far as it has yet proceeded, successful, and at any rate never discouraged, and never suspended.

In this case man, as is meet, is the conquering power, and external nature that which gives way and yields itself in subjection. Here there is most of true romance—most of that kind of enchantment which leads us captive in the immortal fiction of Defoe. In the little secluded society, also, gathered together on this rock, in the midst of the wide waste of waters, we have an object of contemplation somewhat of the same kind with the imprisoned solitary of the more ample South Sea Isle, in all those other respects which make his story dear to the imagination and the heart of every reader. There are the compact though bounded domain,—the unparticipated dominion,—the novel and ingenious contrivances,—the curious shifts and substitutions,—the beautiful and wonder-working economy which, in every way, brings so much both of accommodation and embellishment out of the scantiest and most unpromising means,—the sufficiency and independence, in the midst of the deprivation of most of those things which we are accustomed to count indispensable to comfort, if not necessary to existence,—the fondness, unknown in our state of abundance and surfeit, with which even the minutest accessible enjoyment is prized and hugged,—the compensations provided for the loss of old and wonted pleasures in new luxuries or liberties which the place affords,—the transference to so different a scene of the feelings and recollections of the world left behind,—finally, the strange ideal light shed over the whole picture by the far separation of the exiles in their ocean nest, from every other portion of the human family, while their interest about what is going on among the busy multitudes with whom they were wont to mingle, is yet kept alive both by occasional communications, and by the more frequent sight of passing sails, which must seem not so much like to anything real or substantial, as to the tantalizing visitations of the distant or the past that come to the mind in dreams.

The isle of Ascension is a rock, or rather a great cinder, of volcanic formation, placed in the vast ocean that separates Africa and South America, and nearly midway between the two continents. It is distant fourteen or fifteen hundred miles from the nearest point of either. The nearest spot of land to it is the small uninhabited island of St Matthew, 520 miles to the north-east. The nearest inhabited spot is St. Helena, which lies to the south-east of it, and is 685 miles distant.

It is said to have derived its name from having been discovered by the Portuguese navigator João de Nova Gallego, on Ascension Day, 1501. Although it was afterwards much resorted to by ships from India and elsewhere, no establishment was ever formed upon it till it was taken possession of as a military station by the English Government, on the transportation of Napoleon to St. Helena, in 1815. A fort was then built to defend the bay where vessels put in, and a small garrison, with a naval officer as Governor, left in charge of it.

The whole extent of the island, which is of an oval form, is only about eight miles in length by six in breadth. It is about the size of London. The appearance which it presents from the sea is in the highest degree bleak and wild. A single green mountain, 2,900 feet in height, towers near the centre of the island over a black tableland, which, on the north side, descends gradually to the shore, but on the south terminates in high and bold precipices. Other mountains, of inferior elevation, and verdureless, rise around. Little verdure, or even soil, indeed, is to be seen, except in a few sheltered spots. The greater part of the surface exhibits only sheets and insulated masses of lava, or fields of cinders and ashes. The basins of exhausted volcanoes present themselves in all directions.

The principal portion of the present paper consists of a communication by Captain H. R. Brandreth, R.E., who surveyed the island in 1829, by the order of the Admiralty. At this time the population "consisted of about 140 Europeans, principally of the Marine corps, and 76 Africans—making a total of about 220 persons; among whom were five

military officers, one civil officer, fourteen white women (the wives of the non-commissioned officers and privates of the Marines), and fourteen black women with their children." A small town had grown up near the roadstead, "which," continues the writer, "on my arrival, consisted of a collection of miserable tenements, with walls put together without lime, and harbouring vermin, roofs of canvas or shingles, and floors of sandstone or tarras. The hospital, which occasionally received the sick of the African squadron, was placed in a hollow, and consisted of four rooms, each about 16 feet by 11; and the Africans occupied a congeries of wretched hovels, dark and filthy. A victualling store, a tank, and a small stone tenement for the officers, were the only buildings that redeemed the establishment from the appearance of an African village. In the country or mountain-district, the accommodations were somewhat better for the officers, but the establishment generally was similar to that of the town."

The anchorage near the town, which is merely an open roadstead, was defended by a few guns, placed on a projecting slip of land, but without any breast-work. Behind the guns was a building, with a canvas roof, which served as a powder magazine. A main road had been formed from the town to the mountain district, and also a few other roads and paths. About forty-five acres of the most elevated portion of the land, where the soil is deepest, were in cultivation; producing the sweet and English potato, peppers, tomatoes, cassava, calaloo (or West Indian spinach), carrots, turnips, cabbages, pompons, French beans, and a few pines, bananas, and water-melons.

One of the worst discomforts which the garrison had up to this time to contend with, was the deficient and precarious supply of water. The only spring known to exist on the island was that called Dampier's spring, having been discovered by that navigator, when he was shipwrecked here, in February, 1701. He has described its situation in his own admirably clear, precise, and graphic manner. "On the 26th (the third day they were on shore), to our great comfort," he says, "we found a spring of fresh water, about eight miles from our tents, beyond a very high mountain, which we had to pass over, so that now we were, by God's providence, in a condition of subsisting sometime, having plenty of very good turtle by our tents, and water for the fetching. The next day I went with my officers to see this watering-place. We lay by the way all night, and next morning early got thither, where we found a very fine spring, on the south-east side of the high mountain, about half a mile from its top; but the continual fogs made it so cold here that it would be unwholesome living by the water. Near this place were abundance of goats and land-crabs. About two miles south-east from the spring we found three or four shrubby trees, upon one of which was cut an anchor, and the year 1642. About half a furlong from these, we found a convenient place for shelter in any weather; and here many of our men resorted, the hollow rocks affording convenient lodging; and the goats, land-crabs, men-of-war birds, and boobies, furnishing food: and the air was wholesome."

The supply of water, Captain Brandreth states, at his visit in 1829, was still scanty and uncertain. "It depended," he says, "on springs or drips in the precipitous banks, and the rains that could be collected in easks and a few old iron tanks. A stone tank at George Town, calculated to hold about eighty tons, was supplied with water from the mountains, a distance of six miles. Three carts, six oxen, and three drivers were employed daily in the transport of about three hundred and sixty gallons of this water. The supply from the whole of the drips was estimated at somewhere about four hundred and eighty gallons per day; but even this quantity was liable to considerable diminution after long droughts. It does not appear that there had been at any time one hundred tons of fresh water in store on the island. Several attempts had been made to procure a further supply by boring. The auger had been introduced nearly horizontally, or in the direction of the sub-stratum, along which it was supposed the water passed and formed a drip on the face of the precipice. The object, I presume, was to cause a stream to flow more freely—certainly not to arrive at the source of the spring.

But besides this, Captain Bate, acting on the advice of an eminent foreign naturalist who visited the island, sought for water by the usual process of boring. The spot was selected near high-water mark, on account of the neighbourhood of calcareous tufa, in the formation of which fresh water was considered an indispensable agent. The experiments were attended with great labour, and were unsuccessful. Those concerned in them were probably not aware that, according to experiments, the vapour from salt water intensely heated under pressure will, by passing through loose sand, agglutinate the particles and form the solid sandstone of Ascension, without the agency of fresh water; consequently, that this would not necessarily be found in its neighbourhood. A second trial for water in the low lands was decided on by Captain Bate and myself; and in the event of its failure, I recommended others to be made in the mountain-district."

Having, on his return to England, submitted his views with regard to the improvements which might be made on the island to the Admiralty, Captain Brandreth returned to see the works commenced in 1830. "In the mean time," he proceeds, "a quantity of iron pipes had been sent out, and Captain Bate had commenced preparations for laying them down from a tank he had constructed at Dampier's spring, five miles distant from the town, about one thousand feet above its level, and the same depth below the mountain-district; where the water from the springs or drips was to be collected in a smaller tank, and passed to the larger one by a second line of pipes. I had expected on my arrival, the satisfaction of finding a supply of water in the mountain-tanks; but, unfortunately, during the twelve or fourteen months of my absence the island had been afflicted with a severe drought, and I found barely forty tons in store. The search for it in the low lands had failed; the springs or water-drips, instead of gushing out plentifully, were scantly trickling; and the skies were glorious, but unproductive in their unclouded splendour. Under these circumstances, I pressed for further experiments, in boring, and fixed upon a spot high up in the mountain-district, on the windward side of the island, and at the bottom of a steep ravine, the sides of which were eighty feet in height, and where the section showed the arrangement of the strata to consist of volcanic matter lying on beds of retentive clay. The clouds and mists, and constant evaporation from the sea, were evidently arrested by the high land, and their moisture deposited here; and the experiment fully succeeded. At a depth of twenty-five feet from the surface we found a spring, that for the last five years has yielded from four to seven tons daily, and has probably averaged about five tons a day throughout the year. The question of a supply of water was thus set at rest; and when, in March last, after a lapse of five years, I revisited the island on my way home from St Helena, I found abundance of water in it, and learnt that the average amount in the tanks throughout the year was *one thousand tons*."

We will now give a few extracts from the portion of the paper which describes the sort of life led by the tenants of this singular spot:

"Notwithstanding the general aspect of desolation—the scanty productions of nature—the remote and isolated position of the island, between the two shores of Africa and America—the infrequency of any direct communication with England—and the merely casual relief to the solitude of the little community by the arrival of a ship—the sojourners on this wild spot, amidst the waste of waters, rarely complain of their lot, or affect *ennui* arising from the absence of the many amusements and stirring incidents that minister to the wants of idle or impatient spirits elsewhere. The secret is to be found in constant occupation—in the brilliancy and elasticity of the atmosphere—in the remarkable salubrity of the island—and in the good sense, tact, judgment, and temper with which the commandant superintends the whole establishment, and exercises his civil, military, and patriarchal sway. Under the firm and benign influence of Captain Bate, the island has on several occasions appeared to me to present an undeniable sample of a happy and contented community, with only such small leaven of discontent as is perhaps unavoidable in any circumstances."

"The officers and privates of the Royal Marines are employed from sunrise to sunset in the cultivation of the mountain district, and the usual business of a farm—in improving or forming new roads—in erecting forts and batteries, barracks, stores, and tanks—in completing the means for conveying water from the mountain to the town—in boating and turtling: besides which, and other occupations appertaining to a community of civilians, the officers and soldiers perform the usual duties of a garrison."

"On my first visit, a party was stationed at Dampier's Springs, and engaged in building Captain Bate's tank. The men had contrived to form habitations out of the extensive and compact bed of cinders and ashes in the neighbourhood. A little Devonshire woman in-

habited one of these caves: her husband had scooped out a parlour and a bed-room, each about eight feet square, plastered the roof and sides, floored it with canvass, and given the whole coat of white-wash; so that, while all in front and around the cave was black with ashes and other volcanic matter, all within was of unrivalled cleanliness and neatness. This little Devonshire dame was called Cinderella; and others, with more or less care and neatness, but with similar ingenuity, improved their accommodations in the same way.

"A merchant-vessel, of about 360 tons, also touched on a rock on the north-east coast of the island, and when she anchored in the roadstead was in imminent danger. Captain Bate immediately despatched an officer and party of marines to the assistance of the crew; and, after great toil and exertion, the garrison succeeded in unloading the vessel, and in preserving the greater portion of her cargo. The ship was then hove down to rafts in the open roadstead, under the superintendence of Lieutenant M'Arthur, of the Royal Marine Artillery, and thoroughly examined, repaired, and enabled to complete her voyage home in perfect order. I witnessed the judgment and science displayed by Mr M'Arthur on the occasion, and the ready cheerfulness with which the privates of the Marines worked at the pumps, and discharged the cargo; and I returned home in the ship.

"A line of iron pipes of nearly six miles in length, from the mountain to the town, has been now completed. On my arrival in the island, to commence this work, I found that I could obtain perfectly efficient workmen from the corps of the Marines. That portion of the duct that extends from the mountain tank to Bate's tank was the most laborious: the length did not much exceed 3000 feet, but the perpendicular height was about 1000. Mr Barnes, of the Royal Marines, superintended this portion of the work, and by his exertion and resource overcame all difficulties. But perhaps the most extraordinary evidence of the industry and ingenuity of the garrison is furnished in the mountain district. The spring of water that was found by boring, with the other principal springs or drips, lies on the windward side of the island; and between them and the mountain tank, whence the line of pipes to the town commences, high land interposes. A tunnel, upwards of 600 feet in length, has been driven through this land, and a pipe laid down communicating with the tank. The tunnel is sufficiently wide and broad to admit of a person of middle size walking through with ease; it is worked out of compact beds of cinders and ashes, and occasionally of clay and trachyte: it was executed in a surprisingly short time, and, doubtless, with much labour, but with very trifling cost.

"To these evidences of the ingenuity, ready resource, and industry of the garrison, I may add, that, under the direction of Captain Bate and Lieutenant M'Arthur, Fort Cockburn, and a small enclosed work for the defence of the roadstead, have been completed. Commodious and handsome buildings for the accommodation of the officers, privates, and sick, together with workshops, a victualling store, and tanks, principally constructed of the stone and mortar of the island, have superseded the miserable buildings this officer found on his arrival; while, in the mountain lands, the farming and cultivation generally, under the immediate superintendence of Captain Payne, are extending and improving, and yielding promise of future success. The improvements in the mountain communications are also worthy of record; and Break-neck pass, in particular, which the stranger once attempted with a nervous shiver, is now only a traditional name, being traversed by a carriage-road.

"The usual routine of duty and labour is sometimes interrupted and relieved by excursions to different parts of the island. The residents in the town thus exchange their sultry climate for the more moderate temperature of the mountain. The thermometer varies 10° or 15° between the two points."

* * * * *

"The arrival of a ship is of course an event with this little community; and the kindness and hospitality with which passengers or other visitors are received and treated will probably be gratefully remembered by many.

"On my first visit the island was not graced with the presence of any of the officers' families; but afterwards several ladies arrived, and on my last visit I heard the history of many a joyous excursion, undertaken by the female passengers of several ships, over the wild tracts, and of many a merry dance also in the new mess-room."

There may, we are inclined to think, be worse quarters than the Isle of Ascension, after all. It is not a place for a person of a very expatiating turn, certainly; but those who can exist on a somewhat short allowance of locomotion, may, it appears to us, pass their time happily enough here. The range of movement which the island affords is not, however, so very contracted. We shall not compare a residence here with confinement on board ship, because the two cases are in all respects incongruous.

The largest and most commodious ship that ever was built, stuck fast in one spot in the midst of the waters, would be an imprisonment, set against which the range of the Island of Ascension would deserve to be called boundless liberty. And then, as Johnson observed, there is the danger of being drowned in the ship, which is an addition to the proper inconveniences of a prison. On the other hand, the thing of life, carrying us so swiftly from clime to clime, and taking us, if we will, the round of the whole various sea and earth, is in another sense less of a prison than the largest island or the largest continent on the globe, if a man were to be confined within the bounds of either. But how many persons are there who for years never step beyond the limits of the town or the parish they reside in? Now, the Isle of Ascension is of the size of a respectable parish, or of our very largest towns. After all, it is no worse than to pass whole years, as many persons in London do, without ever taking longer tether than four miles from St Paul's. The space immediately around St Paul's is, no doubt, in some respects more interesting than that overlooked by the Green Mountain; and, especially, intelligence of what is going on in all parts of the world is constantly trickling into London by a thousand ducts. We are here, as it were, in the centre of the Panopticon. Yet although these daily and hourly supplies are agreeable enough in their way, it must be a great pleasure too, after long expectation, to receive the two or three months' newspapers and letters all at once, and so to drink up greedily in one great rich draught, with an appetite excited by protracted thirst, what it is given to us only, with our comparatively languid sense, to sip in drops. And as for still better enjoyments, why may not most of those either of a solitary or a social character be had in Ascension as well as in London? For reading and study it must be the very best place in the world. The society too, although if the whole population were gathered together it would make but a poor rout, is large enough to furnish out, whenever it is wanted, either a cheerful fireside circle, or a party for an out-of-doors-day of exploration or sport.

One thing at least they have at Ascension of which Londoners must envy them—their turtle. "The island for a long time," says Captain Brandreth, "was chiefly celebrated in the 'Almanac des Gourmands,' and owed its distinction to the abundance of turtle found on it. The number of these amphibious creatures that have been caught year after year, and their enormous size, have frequently staggered belief. I have already stated, that in one year upwards of 2500 were turned on the beaches, among which were several that weighed from six hundred to eight hundred pounds each. The supply in general is so abundant as to be issued to the ships and troops as fresh meat; and this transcendent delicacy is cooked after the ordinary fashion of beef or mutton. I have witnessed, indeed, the fins of a splendid turtle cast away as offal: let me add, however, that the offence was committed by a negro, and not by a more civilized being."

"The turtle are usually collected in two large ponds or creeks, and the only precaution adopted to ensure their living and flourishing for the shambles is the occasional change of water with the tide. In quality the turtle of Ascension, when scientifically served up, is esteemed of high and undoubted merit; but it is in general too large to reach England. On my return from my first visit to the island, the commandant freighted the transport with sixty of the finest flappers that the season had produced. They were destined for some of the most distinguished individuals in England; and the largest and finest was set apart for his late Majesty, with instructions, that if but one survived it should be considered as so appropriated—the commandant acting, as nearly as possible, upon the principle that the king never dies. And the precaution was by no means unnecessary, as in fact only one did survive. To prevent intrigues in favour of particular patrons or friends, each turtle was marked on his fair white belly-shell with the name of the owner; and the sailor in charge of the party duly reported each morning their state and condition, as thus,—"Please your honour, the Duke of Wellington died last night;" or, "I don't like the looks of Lord Melville this morning, sir." Then followed certain interesting questions,—"How is the Lord Chancellor?" "Why, he looks pretty lively, sir;" and so forth."

An interesting letter is appended to Captain Brandreth's notes from Mrs Colonel Power, dated Ascension, Nov. 22, 1834, which gives a very grati-

fying account of the progress the improvements begun at the station a few years ago have continued to make. The population of the island, Mrs Power states, now amounts to above 400 souls in all; about 250 being men, and the remainder women and children. Upon the subject of the turtles, she says:—

"The turtle season will shortly commence; it lasts from December to May or June. During the height of the season, from forty to fifty are turned in a night; they are taken when they come to deposit their eggs in the sand. There are three or four bays to leeward which they most commonly frequent, and two men are placed, during the season, to turn them at night; they are then conveyed in carts to the ponds, where they are kept for provision. It is remarkable that no male turtle have been ever seen; and that the young ones, after they are hatched about four or five months, and are about the size of one's hand, crawl away, and are never seen again until they are four hundred pounds weight. They are generally from four hundred to eight hundred pounds weight when taken in the season; and are kept in two ponds. About four or five hundred is the number generally taken. The meat is sold at 2d. per pound; but a whole turtle would cost about 50s."

Dampier mentions the Isle of Ascension and the island of Caymans (otherwise called Tortuga, out from the Bay of Honduras), in the West Indies, as the most remarkable breeding-places of the green turtle he had ever heard of. "One thing," he observes, "is very strange and remarkable in these creatures; that at the breeding time they leave for two or three months their common haunts, where they feed most of the year, and resort to other places only to lay their eggs; and 'tis not thought that they eat anything during this season; so that both he and she grow very lean; but the he is to that degree that none will eat them." At both Ascension and Caymans, he says, when the breeding time is past, there are none remaining. "Doubtless," he adds, "they swim some hundreds of leagues to come to those two places."

The green turtles that resort to the Isle of Ascension are of the largest species anywhere found. Individual fishes, however, are sometimes caught of dimensions much exceeding the largest that commonly make their appearance. "I heard," says Dampier, "of a monstrous green turtle once taken at Port Royal, in the Bay of Campeachy, that was four foot deep from the back to the belly, and the belly six foot broad. Captain Roch's son, of about nine or ten years of age, went in it as in a boat, on board his father's ship, about a quarter of a mile from the shore. The leaves of fat afforded eight gallons of oil." Wordsworth, it will be remembered, has borrowed this incident for his poem of 'The Blind Highland Boy,'—substituting such a turtle shell for the less elegant vessel (a washing-tub, it may be supposed) in which the boy actually entrusted himself to the dangerous current of Loch Leven. It may be doubted if the tale has gained as much in elegance as it has lost in probability by this embellishment.

There are various ways of catching the turtle besides the mode practised at the Isle of Ascension. Sometimes it is struck with a sort of harpoon. At this the Mosquito Indians used to be very dexterous; Dampier tells us that two or three of them were generally kept on board their ships by the Buccaneers on that account. In some parts nets are used. Dampier mentions an odd way sometimes followed by the people of Natal, near the Cape of Good Hope. "They take," he says, "a living sucking fish, or *Remora*, and fastening a couple of strings to it (one at the head and the other at the tail), they let the sucking fish down into the water, on the turtle ground, among the half-grown or young turtle; and when they find that the fish hath fastened himself to the back of a turtle, as he will soon do, they then draw him and the turtle up together."—"This way of fishing," he adds, "as I have heard, is also used at Madagascar." It is stated in Lord Anson's Voyage, that when they were in the South Sea the turtles used to be caught in

plenty as they lay asleep during the heat of the day on the water, by a good diver plunging into the sea, and, after having risen close to the fish, catching hold of its shell near the tail with his hand, and detaining it with its head held down in the water till both were taken up. Supported by the turtle the man lay on the water at his ease. Labat, in his *Afrique Occidentale*, says that the turtles on the coast of Western Africa run with great quickness over the sand when pursued, and one of them will easily carry two men on its back.

Mrs Power, it will be observed, states that two men are found sufficient as a night-watch to turn the turtles at the Isle of Ascension. Dampier says, "A large green turtle, with her weight and struggling, will puzzle two men to turn her." It is probable that if the creature were not burthened as it is with the load of eggs, sometimes 200 or 250 in number, which it carries when it comes ashore at Ascension, it would not be so easily captured. A notion may be formed of the strength it sometimes exerts from the following story, which we find in another paper of the Journal before us, Lieutenant Kempthorne's memoir 'On the Eastern Shores of the Persian Gulf,' and with which we shall conclude. It is the most perilous affair with a turtle we remember to have met with. The scene is the small Island of Ashtola, lying about twelve miles from the coast of Mekran, on the north-east side of the Gulf:—"A party went on shore one night for the purpose of catching turtle, a description of which may not be uninteresting. We left the ship at sunset, and reached the shore about dark, then hauled the boat upon the beach; and when this was done formed ourselves into two distinct parties, and dispersed to different parts along the beach. Having reached the place where we thought it likely that the turtle would land, we lay down, keeping a sharp look out and making as little noise as possible. The moon had risen some time, and was shedding her silvery rays on these desolate regions; the opposite coast in the distance, which is very mountainous, and the ship riding at anchor, had together a beautiful effect: the sea was perfectly calm, and everything appeared to be sleeping in the stillness of the night, and not a whisper being heard among the party—the surf dashing against the rocks alone breaking the silence of the scene. We were thus all in anxious expectation of the appearance of the turtle; and six bells had just gone on board—that is, it was eleven o'clock, P.M.—when we saw the first, to our great delight, coming on shore just opposite us. It looked like a black rock moving slowly and steadily out of the water. We did not interrupt its progress until it had got some distance upon the beach, when a rush was made towards it, and it was immediately turned over on its back, without giving it time either to defend itself or blind its assailants by throwing the sand with its flippers or fins, which they do with such force that it is almost dangerous to come near them. It took six stout men thus to turn the largest that was caught; and the following incident will further show the immense strength of these animals. One of our men, the gunner, wandered away by himself to the further end of the beach, where he thought to have all the sport to himself, not doubting for a moment that he would be able to turn any turtle which he found; but, on the contrary, to his surprise, not being absent long before espying a large one making towards the beach, he allowed it to come up some way, and then ran over to it and attempted to turn it. All his endeavours were however fruitless; and by some means he got his hand between the shell and the neck, which the animal, by drawing in its head, jammed and held there so tight that he could not withdraw it. The turtle then began to crawl towards the sea, dragging the man with it; and he was in imminent danger of being carried off, when he began to call for assistance. Our party were at first somewhat alarmed at the cries, thinking that some serious accident had happened, and immediately ran towards the place from which the sound proceeded, when we arrived just in time to save the poor fellow from a watery grave. The turtle was close to the edge of the sea, and was carrying him off as if he were nothing; nor was it without some difficulty that we released him from his perilous situation—dragging the turtle above high-water mark and turning it over. The man got off with only a few bruises, but was much frightened; and we all had a good laugh at him for his adventure."

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